



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

were all scattered and gone, and nothing of them remained in Bohemia Manor. The short-lived sect died out about the same time in Holland.

6. — *Plain Dealing, or News from New England.* By THOMAS LECHFORD. With an Introduction and Notes by J. HAMMOND TRUMBULL. Boston: J. K. Wiggin and Wm. Parsons Lunt. 1867. Sm. 4to. pp. xl., 211.

ON the 27th of June, 1638, one Thomas Lechford landed at Boston. Before leaving England he had been a member of Clement's Inn, one of the Inns of Chancery, but it does not appear that he had ever been called to the bar, or had advanced beyond the position of an ordinary solicitor. A year before his coming to New England he had suffered "imprisonment and a kind of banishment" for the part he had taken in the trial of Mr. Prynne, with whom he seems to have had friendly relations; and it was probably to avoid further persecution, and because he was dissatisfied with the state of affairs, both political and ecclesiastical, in England, that he determined on casting his lot with the new colony across the Atlantic. "Almost from the hour of his landing at Boston he was regarded with distrust by those whose influence prevailed in State and Church. First, because of his profession; for, to 'some of the magistrates,' and doubtless to Governor Winthrop himself, the employment of 'lawyers to direct men in their causes' seemed more objectionable than the custom of obtaining advice from the judges on an *ex parte* statement before the public hearing of the cause." No advocate was allowed in the new colony, and "the exercise of the profession of an attorney was discountenanced so far as possible without absolute interdiction."

"But Lechford was not only professionally, but doctrinally, objectionable. Though he came to New England, as he says, with a disposition to 'lay aside all by-respects, to join with the church here,' 'he could not be satisfied in diverse particulars,' and 'desired to open his mind in some material things of weight concerning the Christian faith' wherein he differed from the received belief of the Massachusetts churches. He was not long in giving to these points of difference more than a sufficient prominence." He set them forth, not only in conversation, but also in two or three manuscript volumes, "which he tendered for the perusal of some of the jealous guardians of orthodoxy in the churches." He was an honest but narrow-minded enthusiast, a man with a weak head but a strong conscience, much given to thought and discussion concerning the controverted questions of state and church

polity, which were then of foremost interest, and one of those troublesome members of an infant community who find it hard to conform to the principles established by the ruling authorities. His intentions were not bad, but his course was likely to work harm in a commonwealth, the security of which for the time rested on the strength it gathered from the general conformity of opinion among its members. One of his books, "Of Prophetie," was submitted to an assembly of the elders, who pronounced its doctrine erroneous; and as he would not admit his error, "he was compelled to remain without the church, and exclusion from church fellowship carried with it exclusion from the privileges of a freeman, and disqualification for civil office."

For two or three years he gained a scanty livelihood as a conveyancer, scrivener, or draughtsman. In 1639, being engaged in the conduct of a cause, at the quarter court in September, he fell under the censure of the court, for going to the jury and pleading with them out of court, and was debarred "from pleading any man's cause hereafter." He submitted with good grace to this punishment; but his profession gave him, under the restrictions imposed upon it, only a poor support, although he received some employment from the magistrates in transcribing records, instruments, and a "breviat of laws," subsequently adopted as the Body of Liberties. While engaged in this work he made various suggestions, and proposed various objections to the magistrates, which seem to have deserved and received attention from them.

Gradually, however, as was but natural in his position, he grew more and more dissatisfied with the condition of affairs in New England, both civil and ecclesiastical. His new experience modified his old opinions. He acknowledged that he had been "ignorant and misled in England." He came back to, if indeed he had ever deserted, the old ground of no church without a bishop, and no state without a king. He fancied he saw things going from bad to worse under the influence of independency in the Church, and "election" in the state. He did not hide his conviction, and in December, 1640, he was brought before the magistrates, and, being cautioned by them, "acknowledged that he had overshot himself, and is sorry for it, promising to attend his calling and not to meddle with controversies."

In 1640 he became involved in the famous legal quarrel about Goody Sherman's sow, and got into a fresh trouble, from which he escaped by embarking for England in August, 1641. He again took up his residence at Clement's Inn, and shortly after died. Such is almost all that is known of the first Boston lawyer.

A few months after his return to England he published the little

volume, a reprint of which, under the editorship of Mr. Trumbull, has just appeared in Messrs. Wiggin and Lunt's valuable "Library of New England History." The book is one which well deserved to be thus reprinted. "'Plain Dealing,'" says Mr. Trumbull, "was not written in an unfriendly spirit. However prejudiced [are the author's] judgments, however unwarranted his inferences, in his record of *facts* he is conscientious, painstaking, tolerably exact, and almost always reliable. And this it is which gives to his book its peculiar value. It is a view of New England, — more particularly of Massachusetts, — taken upon the spot by an intelligent observer, who, though unsympathizing, was not in the main unfriendly; and who, while he certainly did 'naught extenuate,' cannot be charged with setting down aught in malice. His mistakes are comparatively unimportant; and the information he gives of the state of the country, civil and religious, is valuable enough to render his book nearly indispensable to the study of New England institutions."

The original volume is now exceedingly rare. The book was, however, reprinted in the third volume of the Third Series of the Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections. That Society also possesses a manuscript copy of a part of "Plain Dealing," in the handwriting of the author, which Mr. Trumbull conjectures to have been a portion of the copy originally intended for the printer, "but that on his passage homeward, or after his return, the author found so much to amend, and so much new matter to add, that it became necessary to make another revised copy, from which the book was printed."

We cannot speak too highly in praise of the manner in which Mr. Trumbull has edited the work. His Introduction and Notes are full of the most valuable and useful illustration. The Introduction contains all that is known of Lechford's history, and of the details of his residence in Boston, while the Notes exhibit an acquaintance with the original sources of New England history no less wide than thorough. The book, as Mr. Trumbull has edited it, is, in truth, "nearly indispensable to the study of New England institutions." Mr. Trumbull promises to give us shortly a volume of Lechford's business journal during his residence in Boston, printed from his own short-hand manuscript, and comprising his entries of business transactions, copies or abstracts of instruments drawn by him, and letters to his correspondents in New and Old England.

Messrs. Wiggin and Lunt deserve much credit for the manner in which this volume is got up. It is, like their historical publications generally, an admirable specimen of book-making. The printers, Messrs. Rand and Avery, take rank with the best in the country.